

The Fall 930

Chapter 930: Departure

Space twisted, but the confusing blur was nothing to the confusion already raging in Zac's mind. Emperor Limitless' name was Laondio Evrodok and not Karz? It completely threw a lot of Zac's theories out the window.

Not only that, but Laondio was even a name he knew. Laondio was the talented alchemist Zac had seen in his bloodline vision. He had been a unique talent of the Blue Spring Sect that Karz had managed to enter in the second vision.

But the Blue Spring Sect seemed to be the equivalent of a D-grade force at best. Being talented in such a faction ultimately didn't amount to much. To think a random alchemist managed to go from such a place to standing at the peak of all existence.

Or had he?

This was all ancient history. Between the founding of the Limitless Empire and the birth of the System, hundreds of millions of years had passed. Who knew exactly what happened all those years ago. Perhaps Karz had taken the identity of this alchemist for some reason? Or was Karz the true Emperor Limitless, but had his throne usurped? Why else would Leandra say that he carried the 'Original Sin'?

It was impossible to tell, but Perala's proclamation had undeniably left ripples on the calm lake of certainty.

Space soon stabilized, and Zac found himself standing in an enormous chamber made out of stone. Walls were covered with inscriptions, and the air was rife with Spatial Energy. Of course, that might be because of the templar and two nuns standing in the distance, surrounding a familiar gemstone; Gemmy.

There were some clear differences to the Dimensional Seed, though. For one, the gemstone was just over half the size. Secondly, it had turned squarish with a radiant cut. Around it, a mesh of some sort of Spiritual Silver had been added, making her look like a fancy amulet.

Tremendous waves of Spatial Energy surrounded gemmy and the three cultivators, who had to be the Monarchs Perala mentioned before. They were still hard at work, infusing tremendous amounts of energy into the gemstone.

"What happened to you?" a familiar voice said, and Zac turned over to see Ogras, Iz, Billy, and Leyara standing to his side, looking curiously at him.

"I had a talk with the Void Priestess," Zac explained.

"You talked with master?" Leyara said with surprise. "Why?"

"She wanted to clarify some things," Zac said.

"Your friend was just telling us how you closed the gate," Leyara sighed. "I'm sorry, I didn't expect the danger to be that great."

"Well, it worked out in the end," Zac said. "What's going on here? Did something happen?"

"Haha, how can Billy's plan fail?" Billy said triumphantly.

"They are helping stabilize the realm so Billy can provide access a bit quicker," Ogras explained.

"We were lucky Miss Tayn and her guides arrived when they did," Leyara added. "The final touches were much more difficult to deal with than we expected. But I'm curious, how do the two of you know each other?"

"It's a bit complicated," Zac said with a wry smile.

"Fate," Iz said, speaking up for the first time since Zac returned.

Leyara's brows rose with surprise, but before she could speak, another presence appeared right in front of them. It was a humanoid golem just a bit bigger than Billy. It emitted no aura, but Zac felt a pang of extreme danger as it slowly turned its head toward him.

"Enough," Iz calmly said.

"I am happy to see you are safe, young miss," the Golem rumbled. "I was worried when I felt the connection to my clone disappear. Are you ready to leave?"

Iz didn't immediately answer but instead glanced at Zac.

"I have some lingering matters to attend to. Kvalk, could you isolate us for a moment?"

The Golem was obviously reluctant, but a fiery barrier still erupted around Zac and Iz while leaving the others outside.

"Is everything okay?" Zac asked as he glanced at the Golem.

"You never answered my question before," Iz said.

"What?" Zac said before he remembered their talk before the Mystic Realm started collapsing. "Oh, what I am doing next?"

"Fate's tide is rising," Iz calmly nodded.

"I know," Zac sighed. "I just heard more powerful factions are on their way. Apparently, the war in this sector will involve the inheritance. It's a big mess."

"I would give you advice if I could, but I believe your future is best explored by yourself," Iz said. "I am heading into the Million Gates Territory next. I would offer to bring you, but my family will not agree as we are technically in contention for Ultom."

"That's fine," Zac nodded. He hesitated for a moment before he decided to speak up again. "I might meet you there, though I'm not sure. I plan on shoring up my foundations before heading to the Perennial Vastness to form my core. I will probably go within two years."

"Perennial Vastness?" Iz slowly nodded. "I've heard of it. Its environment is far superior to this region. Both materials and techniques exist in abundance over there. It should help lessen the burden of your path."

Zac's eyes lit up as this was the first concrete description of the mysterious realm that would make even scions of powerful faction desirous. There being a bunch of materials was the most important part. At the very least, he would have to upgrade his Specialty Core along with his grade, and possibly parts of his bloodline.

And one thing was for sure – his body was always hungry. The more stuff he could gobble up in the Perennial Vastness, the less his own coffers would suffer.

Still, that was just the tip of the iceberg of what he needed to know. "Do... you have any advice? For core creation?"

"I am afraid I'd cloud your path," Iz said. "You are creating your own system. I am not qualified to guide someone like you. But if I could offer one piece of advice, it would be not to limit yourself by conventional wisdom. My grandpa once said that under the Heavens, anything is possible."

Zac nodded in thanks, feeling her sentiment echoing Yrial's. And Zac was of a similar mind himself. If you limited yourself to what everyone said could and couldn't be done, especially here on the Frontier, you'd never rise above.

"I will visit you once more after I've found the pieces," Iz added after a moment.

"What?" Zac exclaimed.

"Our arrangement still stands," Iz smiled as the [Stone of Celestial Void] appeared in her hand.

Zac looked at the treasure with a mix of desire and reluctance. He really wanted it, but the thought of getting roasted by Iz Tayn's flames made him shudder, especially in his current condition.

"Alright," Zac eventually nodded. "Just so you know, I am staying on a planet shielded by the System."

"It does not matter as long as you do not form another eruption of Chaos like you did in the Voidcatcher," Iz said without care, confirming Zac's hunch her tracking method worked even through the System's shroud.

"It's been... interesting... traveling with you," Iz said as a small smile spread across her face. "Be careful not to poke the river of fate too much. If you blow up every place you visit, you'll end up living in ruins."

"Well, I'm working on it," Zac coughed.

Iz nodded, and the next moment she was gone, engulfed in a puff of flames. The Golem was gone as well, but a rumbling fire suddenly appeared in Zac's mind, blocking out all else.

'Boy, our young miss is magnanimous, but the world is cruel. A storm is coming to this corner of space, and you have placed yourself in its center. Talent is useless in the face of raw strength. Ask yourself if it is worth it. Of course, if you assist our young miss in this undertaking, I dare guarantee no force will dare meddle with you or your kin.'

With that, the two were truly gone, leaving Zac with mixed emotions. As expected, her clan didn't share Iz's apparent indifference to Ultom and his relation to it. At least the Golem wanted him to assist Iz in seizing the inheritance rather than outright killing him, which wasn't too bad.

Still, there were no guarantees such a treatment would last. Like the Golem said – talent was useless in the face of raw strength. He had nothing to bargain with when dealing with those kinds of factions. The moment he stopped being useful, he would become expendable.

“What’s wrong?” Leyara asked, which dragged Zac out of his thoughts.

“Oh, nothing,” Zac sighed.

“Girl troubles?” Leyara smiled. “Want me to teach you about the fairer sex?”

“Good luck with that, lass,” Ogras snorted. “You should know a lost cause when you see one.”

“I think I’m doing just fine, thank you very much,” Zac grunted. “So, how long until we can extract the others?”

“Not long,” Leyara said.

Ten minutes later, the powerful fluctuations surrounding Gemmy subsided, and Billy scurried over with worry in his eyes.

“Is Gemmy okay?” Billy asked as the others caught up.

“The Realm Spirit is alive and well but very tired. It will most likely have to enter a long rest to recover,” the Monarch said.

“Ah, Billy always feels better after sleeping,” Billy nodded.

“As the owner, you should still be able to exert basic control over the world. Are you able to sense those still inside? It might take some time to get used to the different sensa-”

The Monarch didn’t get any further before almost thirty people appeared on the platform around them.

“-tions. Huh.”

Everyone was there, except for the small settlement of Gnivelings. Vai looked a bit harried, but her eyes lit up upon seeing Zac standing close by.

“You did it!” the researcher said excitedly as she walked over.

“Nothing to it,” Zac smiled, like he hadn’t almost gotten himself killed just a couple of hours ago.

“What- What are you doing next?” Vai asked.

“Heading back home soon,” Zac said. “How about you join us? The Atwood Empire could use some talented researchers.”

“Ah- I-” Vai stuttered.

“Hey, don’t go kidnapping my little aunt,” Leyara said with a mock scowl. “How about I-”

“No!” Vai said with determination. “Focus on cultivation until you’ve grown up.”

Zac smiled with a shake of his head.

“No need to go back right away,” Ogras suddenly said.

"I thought you would be the most eager one to get back home," Zac said with surprise.

"Fair, but this is a pretty good opportunity, no?" Ogras said. "This is a proper C-grade faction, and they should have some good things for sale. I'm sure the young miss of the vaunted Void Gate can help us in this regard?"

"I'm just the boss's disciple; I don't have any actual authority," Leyara said with a roll of her eyes.

"You are welcome to stay here at Alpha Vigil," one of the Monarchs said. "We must deal with the enemies inside the Mystic Realm in either case."

"Can't Billy just drag them out too?" Billy asked. "Billy can sense them just fine."

"Removing someone unwilling will cause a conflict," the Monarch explained. "With the Realm Spirt so exhausted, it's unwise to exhaust it unduly."

"Alright, let's stay until everything is dealt with," Zac agreed.

Zac and the others spent three more days in Alpha Vigil. The remaining Kan'Tanu cultists were quickly captured or killed as the Void Gate sent over 500 Hegemons into the Mystic Realm. The Templar traitor was also caught, thanks to Billy essentially being omniscient when connecting with Gemmy.

As for the Gnivelings, they chose to join the Void Gate. Honestly, Zac wasn't too surprised. It beat being stuck in a Pocket Realm, and he had to admit the Void Gate was superior to the Atwood Empire no matter how you looked at it. As such, the Mystic Realm became a wild realm with only beasts remaining.

Apart from recuperating, Zac spent most of his time perusing Alpha Vigil's extensive stores and venues. Most stores used the Void Gate's internal currency, but Leyara helped pull some strings to allow Zac to buy some items for Nexus Coins instead. The first thing he bought was a batch of Void Stones just like the ones he saw in the Void Priestess' home.

The stones he managed to buy were unfortunately no larger than fists, but they still contained the equivalent amount of Void Energy to a High-Grade Nexus Crystal. The energy was clean and easily absorbed, so even if they didn't hold as much energy as Void Cores, they allowed him to recover his Void Energy quicker.

Unfortunately, these types of materials only appeared in the Void. It wasn't that actual worlds existed in that weird dimension, but rather that things occasionally wound up there. A Mystic Realm could collapse, and whole mountain ranges could get swallowed by the Void. Usually, those places gradually eroded into nothingness, but on occasion, they mutated into things like these Void Stones.

Thanks to this, Zac also managed to acquire various void-related materials, things he'd never even heard of. Zac even suspected that the Void Priestess had personally intervened for these kinds of things to appear in the contribution store.

With Vai safely returned to the Void Gate, he also completed his bodyguard quest. Of course, the rewards didn't matter much to him, but failing quests was never good. Unfortunately, there was still no word from the others on the squad.

The good news was that Teo Kastella had a life tablet, and it was actually still intact. It looked like he had managed to survive the Cortex collapsing somehow. Hopefully, he had managed to save a few others,

though Zac wasn't too hopeful in that regard. It was an unfortunate reminder that life was all-too-cheap in the Multiverse.

He also managed to strike some tentative agreements through Pretty. She was shocked to find out Zac owned a production line for top-tier Cosmic Vessels, and she said she could almost guarantee that the Allbright Empire would buy as many vessels as he could deliver. Of course, that was contingent on the quality of the vessels, but Zac was confident anything the Creators crafted was up to snuff.

Zac wasn't the only one who benefitted from their stay at the resource depot. Ogras finally got his hands on a Peak-quality E-grade Spirit Tool suited for his style. It was made from a mix of spatial metals and others designed to make it harder to track. It was completely translucent and almost looked like a 3-meter long icepick, but when infused with the Dao of Shadows, it became dark grey. Thanks to its spatial components, the spear could even enter Ogras' shadows without issue.

But soon enough, it was time to leave, though that came with a sudden revelation.

"You're not coming?" Zac said with shock as they stood at the teleportation station. "Why not?"

"Billy made a promise," Billy said with a grimace. "Billy has to go to Southern Mountain."

"What? Where?" Zac said with confusion.

Billy hesitated for a moment before answering. "Before when Billy fell asleep, a statue taught Billy to get stronger. When Gemmy got sick, Billy made a deal with Statue Man. Billy got the array to save Gemmy, but Billy has to join Southern Mountain."

Zac's eyes widened in comprehension, and he remembered how he'd seen Billy cultivate in his sleep. So it turned out he did not only gain levels and comprehension in his sleep, he even received guidance from some master. After all, someone who could just hand out a method like the one they used on Gemmy had to be pretty powerful.

"Don't look at me," Ogras said when Zac glanced in his direction. "Perhaps some sort of karmic connection? Like that monk?"

"Stupid Statue Man always say Billy is a Titan like Statue Man, but Billy is human," Billy huffed.

"Uh," Ogras coughed, and Zac wryly smiled.

From the sound of it, the Southern Mountain was a Titanic Faction. However, Zac had never heard of such a place before. He wasn't even sure it was part of Zecia. Zac doubted it was, considering the method to produce Pocket Realms was beyond even the Void Gate, according to Vai.

In other words, this was a pretty amazing opportunity for Billy. Conversely, Earth didn't have much to offer someone like him, and Zac wasn't sure a brutal war was the best place for Billy to grow. Better he left for a powerful Titanic Faction, even if it meant Earth lost another capable fighter.

"When are you coming back?" Zac asked, opting not to question Billy's lineage. That was a headache for the Southern Mountain.

"Billy doesn't know. But maybe a long, long time. Say hello to Thea and Nigel for Billy?" Billy said with a weak smile.

“... I will,” Zac said after a small pause.

Zac hadn't told Billy about Thea while they were stuck in the Mystic Realm. He figured it wouldn't do anyone any good to drop such a bomb on Billy while things were so chaotic. And now, it didn't make much sense to tell him either.

Or was he just being selfish?

“The Teleportation Array that Billy needs to create is quite complex, but my master promised to help as thanks for Billy helping us solve the problem of the infiltrators,” Leyara added.

“Alright,” Zac said as he looked at the others. “Thank you for everything, all of you.”

“Billy will miss you, Super Brother Man,” Billy said as he lifted Zac in a big bear hug. “You, Horny Guy, not as much.”

“Well, isn't that nice,” Ogras said with a roll of his eyes.

“I'll miss you too,” Zac said. “But I'm sure we'll see each other again. Until then, work hard to get stronger, alright? There are a lot of bad guys out there.”

“Billy will become the strongest,” Billy nodded as though it was a matter of course.

“You're always welcome to visit again,” Leyara smiled. “We'll just have to keep you away from important places, so you don't blow them up as well.”

Zac could only laugh in response. Being known as a walking calamity was at least better than being known as a world-renowned pervert.

“Be careful,” Vai added.

“You too,” Zac smiled. “Next time we meet, we might both be Hegemons.”

“That's-” Vai hesitated. “I'm...”

“I believe you can do it,” Zac said. “After all, you're someone who made it to the depths of the Void Star and back.”

“I'll- I'll do my best,” Vai said with determination in her eyes.

The array flashed to life a moment later, and the two stepped through. He was finally going back to Earth.